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ABSTRACT

If needed significant educational change is to be achieved, some countervailing power source capable of confronting administrative bureaucracy and making it conform to the present needs of the public must be established. Community control, the subdivision of the large system into appropriate communities and the control of each community by its local citizens and their appointees, merits a trial. Among the actions needed to save our public schools are: making school board membership a fulltime, paid assignment; drastic curriculum revision; reform of educator selection and training methods and criteria; staffing schools with skilled organizers and advocates who will work with the people of the community at their direction and on their behalf; finding new, stable sources of public revenues to finance public schools; clarifying the role of parents and teachers in the socialization of children in this urban-industrial world; making educational planning a joint school-parent venture; and, preparing the educational system to provide continuous education and reeducation to adults of all ages and backgrounds as well as to children. This paper was prepared for a book entitled, "Urban Education in the 1970's," edited by A. Harry Passow, to be published by Teachers College Press, Fall 1970. [Not available in hard copy because of marginal legibility of original document.] (JM)

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URBAN EDUCATION: TODAY AND TOMORROW

Although he did not intend it to be used that way, Daniel Patrick Moynihan recently popularized a term that precisely characterizes the prevailing American attitude toward public education. 'Benign neglect' appropriately describes our societal behavior toward our schools.

With pious phrases about our children, with endless cliches about the importance of quality education for all, with conference piled atop conference to determine educational criteria, we have simply denied our children the educational birthright of a rich, free society. Either out of ignorance or more likely out of a calculated personal acquisitiveness, we have subordinated concern for our childrens' education for more important matters. However benign our parental intent, the net effect has been massive neglect.

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And this neglect has, like all other goods and services of this society, been differentially applied to the affluent and the alienated people of the country. Education overall has been severely neglected, but the effect has been felt more rudely in the central city slum than in the suburb or fringe area neighborhood.

Nor has this neglect been only monetary. For a long time teachers and administrators, as well as many parents and public officials, have been defensive about education in our society. They have argued that there was very little amiss with the American educational enterprise that more millions of dollars wouldn't cure. This is not true.

Although more stable public funds would obviously help

the public school system in our urban areas, there are some very deep institutional problems besetting American education that money alone cannot correct. The result of long term neglect is corrosive. The structure of the educational system is warped and the intended functions cannot be performed despite our continued superficial benevolence.

If it were feasible, which I know it isn't, I would recommend that we scrap our present school system and even our concept of education, and begin anew. I say this because I am convinced it would be easier to start all over again rather than attempt to refashion our present educational structure to meet the needs of the present and the future. The plain fact is that our contemporary society is changing so very rapidly that the old ways of educating, the traditional ways of operating schools, the taken-for-granted ways of even thinking about education, about pupils, about teachers, all are markedly different today from what they were in the past, and quite different from what they will be tomorrow.

We have inherited an educational system that originated in the now distant world of the agricultural economy of the nineteenth century. That educational system and its goals sufficed at a time when the teacher was the learned adult whose task was to convey the limited conventional knowledge of the time to the minds of the young. That kind of simple school system worked in that more leisurely period of the past when children were more naive and were removed from access to knowledge except through the teaching and tutoring of their elders, particularly their schoolmaster.

Most of us have not yet really understood that like all other institutions of any society, the school system too must change. Those whom we teach today in the urban community are not just children. And even the children we teach are not cloistered and enclosed; they are children who have access to the streetcorner and the playground, who listen to radio and television, who have often traveled to more places than their teachers, and who, in all respects, are 'brighter' than we were at their age. Not just a little 'brighter', but a lot.

Moreover, our students today include many adults, some of whom are coming back to school because they appreciate the need for refresher work or because they want to complete their education. It is not uncommon to find younger people teaching older ones these days, as the young college instructor teaching the returning freshman grandmother or the child teaching the grandfather how to do New Math. The entire notion of education today must be different from the past. The socio-economic context in which education occurs has been utterly refashioned by our technology, which, for one thing, has drastically altered our concepts of time and space. Our society is no longer agrarian and crudely commercial; it is overwhelmingly urban and industrial with the imperitive factor of technology almost annually causing some new necessity for changing still another facet of our school system and its curricular content. We are living in the age of the computer, of space exploration, of telestar, of deep seated revolutionary thrusts, yet a look at our educational system would not reveal these facts.

What I am saying then about our educatioral system is that it is largely out of date. This applies to most schools in all

segments of the community: in the urban slum and in the suburb alike. And so many people believe that the schools are really something to be put up with, to be endured until their children can get out and can really begin to learn.

At any point in a society's cultural history the schools must provide the leadership for living at that time and in the future. This means that more than any other institutional agency, the schools must keep attuned to the contemporary society and its immediate and emerging needs. Schools must always be relevant to the demands on them, not in the judgment of teachers and principals, but in the judgment of those they serve...parents, citizens, and their children....By such a hard test, most schools today would at best score a barely passing grade, and at worst would fail dismally.

The public school is the one governmental agency that exists in all neighborhoods all over the country. This fact of accessability alone means that most people could relate to their government through their neighborhood school. But by its past and too often by its present behavior, the school has left the impression that its concern is narrow and specific rather than broad and inclusive.

If the urban school is to fulfill its function of reaching and teaching the next generation, it must become an agency that preeminently concerns itself with the total experiences of the neighborhood or community in which it is located. Not only must the school be interested in the problems of the children, their parents and other citizens, but it must also be able to communicate freely and frankly with them. If education is to be made more meaningful, educators must help people view

the school as the place they can go or come to with any problem that vexes them. By their actions, schools must help people overcome their prevailing attitude that schools deal with unrealistic matters and that their children are merely required to spend a certain time there before moving out and into the real world. By their performance, schools must help people recognize that the school is in close, constant touch with everything meaningful going on anywhere in the community or the society or the world.

Another observation about the schools in both urban slums and suburbs is that they are dull places. I submit that, aside from the social life it provides for them, the majority of our urban children from all over the metropolitan region view school as a crashing bore that must be tolerated for the sake of their parents and for the ultimate diploma that awaits after twelve years of attendance. A growing number of these children however are not tolerating it at all. Instaed, they are rebelling overtly or by withdrawel.

Whether of rich or poor economic background, most of our children come to school in the first place much more aware of the world than either their parents or their teachers did years before. For the most part, these children, even when they have been severly disadvantaged economically and have had little educational incentive, these children have learned a great deal about life and the world from television. Television should not be condemned indiscriminately. To the age of about twelve, television is an effective medium for teaching about all sorts of things. Beyond that age LEVEL, it must be used with increasing selectivity or it become repetitious and monotonous. Most

commercial television today isn't dull to children. Given a choice, most children between the ages of three and twelve would much rather watch television than attend school. TV is so much more lively and engaging. Unfortunately, even those over twelve would also prefer to watch TV than attend classes, even though their subsequent learning through that medium drops sharply.

If they were asked, many parents, especially in the slums, but also in the suburbs, would agree that the school system is just another established bureaucracy. Countless parents have had the experience of trying to question or criticise the school, its administrator or some teacher, and have found only consolidated opposition, with no real willingness to listen to anyone. One of the most difficult things for any parent to cope with is the bureaucratization of the school system. Often, counselors, teachers and administrators support each other, no matter what the issue, because they fear that if any lack of unity is shown, all school people will become vulnerable. This is, indeed, an important problem. Many people, especially in neighborhoods of low education or income level, are reluctant to approach the school because they dread contact with school personnel who are frequently indifferent, irrelevant, or even arrogant, affording neither satisfaction on the item complained about nor constructive suggestion to indicate any willingness to change. That reluctance to approach the school, HOWEVER is changing rapidly; in its stead we are beginning to see a popular desire to control the schools and choose their own teachers and administrators.

Let me be clear: Surely, we cannot put teachers and administrators at the mercy of any parent with real or imagined grievances; some protection of course must beguarenteed the teacher. On the other hand, we cannot continue to support sadistic, disorganized, prejudiced, discriminatory or incompetent teachers or administrators by permitting them to hide behind a tight bureacratic barricade. A class hallmark of a profession is that it acts to discipline those of its own members who do not perform professionally. The teaching profession has a challenge before it that it has yet to meet satisfactorily.

Implicit in these comments is the conviction that there are some incompetent teachers in any school system. A minority of our teachers simply put in time, waste their pupils'time, and indulge their own random thoughts as a substitute for effective teaching. However few the number of such teachers, they are a bane to their profession and to the community because they encourage the students' impression that school is merely an obstacle to be overcome. Aside from the difficult question of how to detect and eliminate such persons from the system, there is the even more important problem of how to prevent acceptance of more unfit teachers.

Let us NOTE too, that we have some incompetent administrators who burden their teachers with an infinite amount of detail work, who are rigid in their handling of school affairs, and who have no genuine enthusiasm or talent for the sensitive task of preparing our children to become functioning citizens of a democratic community. These administrators are often overly

concerned with irrelevant minutiae of proper dress or speech or ritual, or with impressing their hierarchical superiors and the parents. Not infrequently they take excessive instruction time from students to prepare such things as musical and dramatic extravaganzas to impress parents. All this masquerades under the heading of good school-community relations. This sort of public relations is no substitute for superior teaching in a school situation where there is freedom, encouragement of fruitful innovation, and appreciation of students, parents and teachers as people who have legitimate rights, interests and feelings.

Of all the agencies of our society, the school is presumed to be the most important for the nourishment of democracy. If our young people are to experience a comprehensive understanding of the merits of the democratic process, certainly the schools must contribute both by precept, by example, and by the opportunity to practice it. Unfortunately, however, on all counts, the American school is among our most undemocratic agencies. Where else but in the school do we continue to maintain the dogmatic authority of the teacher? Where else but in the American school are all class members punished if any of them happens to do something a given teacher dislikes? Where else but in the American school is such a mockery made of the concept of student self-government?

Nor have we done very much in America these past sixteen years to make our schools effectively democratic in their student composition; and we have made only the most modest gains in the desegregation of faculties. Despite the Supreme Court decision of 1954 to desegregate our schools racially, they re-

main today more tightly segregated than ever before, with more black children learning apart from white children than sixteen years ago. Within the American central city, the main problem is no longer that of gaining racial balance in the schools. In many of these cities now, and in more of them soon, the majority of children are or will be black. Racial integration of central city schools will be less and less possible as the school population turns increasingly black. Integration will be possible only by crossing into white suburban school districts.

In this whole area of desegregating schools, the practice and example of democracy are not particularly conspicuous. While it might be too extreme to say that most schools and most teachers continue to teach a value system of implicit white racial superiority, it is not too extreme to state that very little is being taught in most white schools to seek to eradicate racism from the minds of white children. In so many ways then, our schools are not part of the new democratizing thrust of our society. Rather they are part of the conservative, in some instances reactionary drag on our painfully slow forward movement.

No consideration of urban schools can be complete without recognizing their financial straits. Because public schools are still largely dependent for funds on the archaic system of property taxation, and because the property tax base in the central cities is diminishing due to the removal of land for public purposes like freeway construction and university expansion, and because the worth of the property tax base is

declining due to age and obselecence, the amount of property tax money available to the schools gets less and less. Nor is it possible to raise the property tax rate; too many of the remaining residents of central cities are old and poor, black and white alike. The property tax screws can no longer be applied to these people; they cannot afford it.

The unavailability of local money to pay for quality schools is only one part of the dilemna of financing them. The rising militancy of teachers and other school personnel, plus higher costs of all materials in an inflationary economy have increased revenue requirements of all schools. In addition, there is a growing demand for improved quality of education, which of course will require more skilled personnel, more trained paraprofessional help, more modern books, materials and equipment, and more classrooms. Schools in all the major central cities of America are in perilous financial circumstances. Worst of all they lack the taxing authority as well as the sufficient supply of solvent taxpayers to permit them to find a solution of their own. Indeed, in some urban school districts, like Youngstown, it may be necessary to close the system down for lack of operating funds. In all urban school systems there is the everpresent question whether they will be able to remain open full time for a full school year.

In the light of all these difficulties with the schools, obviously radical change is necessary if our children are to be educated appropriately for the societal demands on them. This fact has been understood by some middle and upper income people who have elected to place their children in private

schools. But everyone can't attend private schools. And more recently, lower income people, especially in the inner city, have developed a sharp awareness that their children have been systematically shortchanged in the schools. In the past this awareness was more localized and efforts to improve education for their children were patient and long suffering with the hope that the central administration would do something about it. Now however, a growing number of people are moving in desperation to seek an answer that will provide better quality education for their children now. That answer, many believe, is local community control of the schools that try to teach their children. The growing urban cry for local control, for effective citizen involvement, for decentralization, for some increased measure of actual people participation in managing the schools is a direct reaction to the grossly insensitive conduct of the entire school system by an atrophied centralized bureacracy. Current citizen endeavors to increase their control over schools is the inevitable result of the failure of professionals well enough and equitably enough to satisfy the people. It is difficult to imagine a more irrelevant school system than now exists in most urban centers. Nor is this an indictment of many qualified and committed teachers who are trying vainly to teach in such systems. The immense bureacracy of the public school structure has been unyielding to innovation and the required rapidity of progressive change.

Let me be unambiguous about what I am trying to say: in most large cities the educational administrative bureacracy runs the schools, not the elected Board of Education. That

latter body of uusally well meaning citizens performymostly on a very limited time basis, are rarely fully informed about educational affairs, and really know little about the structure and functioning of the huge agency they are expected to guide. With but few exceptions, school board members take their cues from the school superintendent and his staff. Board members haven't the time and sometimes the competence to follow and comprehend the multiplicity of items and issues that must be resolved in a big city school system. Nor do they have any staff responsible and loyal to them to investigate problems and present recommendations to them. Whether elected at-large from an entire big city system or from districts, school board members are usually the innocent but impotent frontmen for the administrative bureacracy. This is true even if the superintendent wants it otherwise. The sheer logistics of limited time, no staff, and multiple issues compel even the best intentioned superintendent to have to advise and instruct even his most alert board members.

If my premise is correct, an inevitable consequence is the desire of the administrative bureacracy to maintain things as they are as long and as thoroughly as possible. It is the nature of any bureacracy to resent change it does not initiate or approve of, and to endeavor to frustrate and defeat such change wherever it can. This is true even if the superintendent is anxious to have maximum Board and citizen participation. As in any other bureacratic structure, those under the Chief can influence him. They must interpret or misinterpret, or perhaps, reinterpret any decisions that may be made at the top.

Because the superintendent must rely on those below him for advice and information as well as for implementation, administrators everywhere wield great power. The schools are no exception.

The conclusion many draw from these observations is that if significant educational change is to be achieved, we shall have to establish some countervailing power source that can confront the administrative bureaucracy and make it conform to the present needs of the public. The past imperviousness of the professional bureaucracy to relevant change suggests that continued reliance on in-service workshops, conferences, resolutions and internal discussions will not by themselves produce the new educational structure and direction we absolutely must have in slums and suburbs in order to educate our children effectively.

We come then to specific proposals for decentralization and community control. The two are quite different concepts. Decentralization means simply giving some greater degree of authority to local school officials in sub-areas of the system. Decentralization may or may not involve a greater measure of citizen participation, but there is the implicit assumption that local sub-area officials will better understand how to relate to their particular community, perhaps because they are in closer, daily touch with its citizens.

Community control means just what it says: that the large system should be subdivided into appropriate communities and that control of each community should be in the hands of its local citizens and their appointees.

There is a third approach, sometimes called 'decentralization', but which is really a form of community control, and which, because of its hybrid nature, seems destined to fail. This third approach requires the particular, larger system to be divided into multiple districts, each to elect its own school board. In addition, all districts will presumably operate in some respects under the aegis of the central school board, which will be augmented with representatives from each of the multiple districts.

Because of its structure, I foresee an inevitable clash between the several new school districts and the central board. Sonner or later, and probably sooner, an issue will arise on which the districts desire to go one way and the central board members want to move another way. That will be the day of reckoning.

A decentralization approach to school administration could work, if the residents of each area or of most areas were satisfied with the local administration and teaching provided by the central ~~administration~~ SYSTEM. The actual likelihood that a mere decentralized system will work in a major central city is very remote. If it could have worked, it probably would have averted the present educational crisis. The impediment to successful decentralization is the very intransigency of the school bureaucracy. It has been unwilling or unable to permit sufficient administrative and educational variation compatible with the interests and needs of local sub-communities. It has insisted on an outdated uniform curriculum, routinely applied with all the insensitivity of people who really don't care. Under such

circumstances, decentralization of school administration is a mere intellectual abstraction. It can't be achieved. Even if it could be concretely achieved under the best of conditions, it is too late for it to succeed. Peoples' suspicion of the entire educational system is now so deep that nothing less than full-scale citizen control will satisfy those segments of the community that have felt most neglected because they have been.

There is a certain romanticism about community control of schools. It is often heralded as the panacea to the problems facing the schools. Implicitly, it is suggested that if only we allow the people of a neighborhood truly to run their schools, everything will be all right with their childrens' education.

Such is not necessarily the case. If bureaucrats rise to control of large school systems, there is even greater likelihood that they will come to dominate the smaller sub-area systems into which the larger one is subdivided.

There are other disadvantages of such school district fragmentation. One consequence could well be the continuation of unequal financing, especially in low income districts. Unless district lines were repeatedly drawn and redrawn to assure that there were high and low income people in every district, the districts with many poor people would be sharply disadvantaged. To be sure, ~~appeals could be made from~~ these poor districts COULD APPEAL for supplemental state and federal aid. But, even now large urban school districts have little luck attracting attention and money from these broader governmental jurisdictions.

Who believes the small, fragmented poor districts will be heard or heeded at all.

Another disadvantage of fragmenting districts is the loss of economy that comes from mass purchasing. Unless some agreement were made regarding joint purchasing, each subdivided district would doubtless pay more for most items. Besides, there could be a loss of power in statewide lobbying for educationally beneficial programs, increased competition between and among these districts for personnel, and possibly even some difficulty in transferring students from one school district to another when a family chose to move.

A key concern about the operation of these subdivided school districts is that they will lend themselves more easily to control by administrators. Very frankly, in smaller, subdivided districts we should not expect very much more actual citizen participation than now occurs. If people are apathetic now, within a large centralized system, what guarentee is there that they will spring into active awareness of the educational institution and better comprehend its problems when the system is subdivided? Although this enhancement of citizen participation is to be hoped for, and is indeed the rational justification for subdivision, more likely in each district a handful of interested persons (the same small group that now exists and articulates ideas) would become the members of the subdistrict school board and would set policy for that district. Although in a formal sense complete citizen accountability would be achieved, that accountability would practically be only to an interested group of citizens, not to the entire community body. In terms of educational quality, it is not necessarily

better for a minority of citizens in a small subdivided district to make policy than for a similar minority to make policy in a single centralized system. The one advantage might be that the respective ADMINISTRATORS might be more closely attuned to the desires of their neighborhoods. What is most important however is the quality of the policy decisions, as well as the opportunity for a larger measure of genuine citizen involvement. Because the several subdistricts would doubtless go unnoticed by the mass media, there is every likelihood that a new elite would come to dominate these subdistricts: an elite composed of the professional educational administrators and a small group of active local citizens.

If, in the course of events, any subdistrict was split again in order to accomodate the self-determinative interest of some dissenting group, the way would be paved for potentially endless proliferation of school districts. Local community control would have reached its logical end in organizational splintering and educational ineffectiveness.

It is curious to observe that the recent movement across the country toward community control of schools was motivated largely by the race issue. It was argued that only by such subdistricting could black people control their own educational destiny and that of their children. In years past that seemed to be the only route in the large urban center that would assure black people a voice in the education of their own children. Now, however, growth of the black population in central cities across the country makes clear that black political power has increased, and is just about ready to dominate the politics of these cities. Gary, Indiana and Cleveland are only two ex-

amples of black political powess in cities. In Detroit last November (1969) voters came close to electing a black mayor. Also, in Detroit, the Board of Education now has three black members out of seven. Moreover, most educational issues are not decided on a color basis, and there are sometimes one or two white board members who are at least as progressive on the race issue as their black colleagues. The issue of black control over the public school system in America's central cities is fast disappearing as a pertinent issue. Not color of leadership but quality and committment of leadership are the significant elements. And, in this regard we have come to know that all persons with black skins do not necessarily think and act black, whereas some with white skins do.

Despite major difficulties with the community control approach, it appears to be the one that must be tried. There is no longer any confidence in the centralized, bureaucratic administration of the schools in most central cities. Nor is there confidence in most places in an effective decentralized system. The convergence of social and economic forces in our major cities dictates that the people of the community, black and white, have a chance to run their local schools as they believe they should be run.

Without question there will be mistakes, but none will deny that there have been monumental mistakes under the traditional large-scale administration. At least the mistakes of sub-community control will be mistakes of the head, not of the heart. And there is always the chance that in at least some of the subdivided districts, there will be fewer mistakes than under the old, massive structure. Optimists even hope that some

new methods to and outlooks on quality education can be found in some of the new, smaller districts. This very multiplicity of districts lends itself to some experiemntation; it may be possible for the successes of any given district to be observed and incorporated by the others.

I am not especially snaguine about the coming phase in the administration of urban schools. That phase will have significant citizen participation. And, though citizens may know that the present administration of their schools is inept and not in their best interest, they do not per se as citizens know what is good educational substance, practice or method, or how to achieve it.

Nevertheless, citizens deserve the chance to try. The hope is that citizens will hire innovative, responsive, young educators who are willing to try radical approaches, and who will be left free enough of local political pressures to demonstrate what can be done in honest dialogue with citizens. If these objectives can be made to happen in at least some of the locally controlled districts, there is hope that out of these subdivided districts will emerge many fresh ideas in school administration, in curricular development, in the involvement of laymen, in the constructive participation of students, in strengthening the public regard for the public schools.

If I am correct in my general assessment of the public schools of our society, there are numerous basic things we must do immediately:

1. School board membership in our big cities especially should become a fulltime, paid assignment. It is an anachronism akin to having a volunteer fire department to believe that the affairs of a complex, big city school system can be adequately handled by part-time policy makers, however interested, competent, and well intentioned. Whether elected to serve a large centralized system or a small, subdivided community, school board members should be paid enough to permit them to devote all their talents and time to the improvement of their particular educational system. In addition, it would be valuable for the school board to hire its own professional staff. This small group of researchers and analysts would be responsible to the board and able to evaluate proposals emanating from the educational bureacracy.

2. We must review and drastically revise the present curriculum in just about every school in America. The exceptions are very few. Traditional education that was taught and used in the nineteenth century is irrelevant, unless any part of it can be justified in relation to today's and tomorrow's real world. Our methods of teaching must be radically altered too. Evidence suggests that the formally structured classroom situation we have traditionally employed is not conducive to the quickest and best learning. We must find ways to utilize the new electronic equipment such as television, computers, teaching machines, tape recorders. And it won't do to use these modern devices merely to amplify old teaching methods. We must give creative scope to our teachers to break through to the live interests and idealism of our young people. They

want to learn and they can be taught, but learning and teaching must be more imaginatively done than in the past. If we fail to educate our young people, it will be our fault not theirs, but it will be their world that will suffer, not ours.

Actually, it is little wonder that so many of our urban youth drop out of school or resign psychologically before they have completed highschool. They feel out of tune with school and school is too frequently out of tune with them. Instead of bemoaning the drop-out rate, which is particularly high in certain urban communities, we should consider altering the schools' incentive system in order to move administrators and teachers to reinvigorate the current curricula and their methods. Such action might attract and hold young people, indeed might even challenge and inspire them.

3. If we are to raise the public's image of the neighborhood school, teachers and principals must come to view their profession as a significant calling, must genuinely like children, and must be thoroughly keyed to the issues of the contemporary world in which they and their pupils live. It isn't sufficient for teachers to be versed in the latest educational jargon, or to have been a bright college scholar. It will be difficult to find candidates who can be transformed into concerned and effective teachers. Two critical censor points in attempting to recruit such able teachers are the colleges of education and the school boards.

Colleges of education must revise their qualifications for teacher candidates. They must actively seek bright, committed young people who like children. They must radically

change their own courses and curricula to produce teachers who are both intellectually trained and socially conditioned to the urgent realities of the contemporary urban-industrial situation.

School boards must understand...and this means citizens too...that they must pay professional salaries and provide professional conditions for the high quality performance they have a right to expect and which they must secure from their educators.

4. If we are to overcome the unfortunate public image of the school, we must make schools more effective by staffing them with skilled organizers and advocates who have the specific assignment to work with the people of the community at their direction and in their behalf. Because the school is part of the neighborhood, there must be constant, public effort to inform parents what is being taught in school, to involve them in ascertaining the goals of the school and in fostering them, to demonstrate how the school can help resolve some neighborhood problems.

There is no reason why the school...with appropriate additional personnel...should not take the lead in neighborhood improvement efforts, whether it be improved lighting, zoning control, police protection or some other every day matter that concerns people. Citizens are concerned about such mundane matters. They are constantly in need of leadership. Being neighborhood based, the school is a natural agency to work directly with people in helping them to solve their problems.

5. In addition to the school showing an active, continuing

interest in neighborhood affairs, it must also work closely with parents reagrding the mutually agreed upon aims and values of education, and the best ways for them to help teach the children. Truly, we require not just a new math, but rather a whole new educational approach. The school must spark discussion of these matters and express its interest vitally. If people are to become concerned citizen participants in educational affairs, the school must become a stimulating, provocative, available place both for children and adults of every neighborhood.

What I am saying boils down to this:---the school must become a significant local change-agent. While the school must continue to be a place of effective teaching and learning, it must also be a resource, a guide, a part of the daily life of the neighborhood to which people turn on any and every issue. It doesn't make sense to boast of the abstract quality of our knowledge if we cannot apply that knowledge to the problems of our people right where they live. Unless we can thus transform peoples' attitude toward them, we may be better off to save the expense of new school buildings and staff. If the school cannot identify with the people of a neighborhood, then the mere technical skills of its teachers will be of minor value.

6. In broader structural terms, to bring the educational system into the twentieth century and to ready it for the twenty-first, we must prepare it to provide continuous education and re-education to adults of all ages as well as children. With the speed that modern technology improves, it is often nec-

cessary for adults to undergo a second or even a third educational experience to fit them into the rapidly changing economy. To accomplish this essential assignment of continuous adult education, we will probably have to make a sharper distinction between the primary and secondary phases of the educational enterprise. It is possible to compact more content into the first eight or nine grades than we are now doing, and to do so far better than we're doing, and then establish the secondary system in such a way that it will handle both the secondary school needs of our young people as they emerge from the primary system, and also be able to accomodate adults of every age when and as they return to school for all sorts of reasons----occupational, recreational, therapeutic, intellectual, etc.

7. Our schools must adapt themselves to teach effectively and creatively all persons in the society, not just our small children and a handful of middle and upper class elite. Education to their fullest potential is increasingly the requirement for all members of the society. It is obviously their right. Yet our school system, especially at the secondary and college level, is really not now established either in size or in money or in manpower available to provide high quality education for all our children. We are not even doing this at the primary level. An overriding issue on all college and university campuses is that of broadening the student composition to include people who are black, who are poor, who are Spanish-speaking, who are disadvantaged white.

A major difficulty exists in our cities, where through sug-

regation and exploitation, we have assembled a significant youth population that requires massive additional educational support as well as the opportunity to participate in an entirely new school situation that will equip them to function in a multi-racial, urban, industrial society. Because so many of our teachers and administrators are middle class, and because we have hitherto thought so little of the people of the inner city that we really didn't bother to educate them to the limits of their native ability, because of these things we must now pay the enormous price that segregation and exploitation cost. We have no pertinent choice but to go back and try to educate these by-passed children and their older brothers and sisters, and their parents as well. This will not be easy or inexpensive; it may not even be possible because we have delayed so long; we cannot expect to overcome the deprivation of centuries by any simple device or mere good will. We will be lucky to succeed at any price, yet most of us do not seem disposed to expend more than token amounts in rather ineffective ways in the central city. We would like to be able to buy our way out of our educational crisis, but we want to do so at a bargain basement price.

8. If urban schools especially are to be able to operate at all, we shall have to find new, stable sources of public revenues. As indicated previously, the property tax is neither equitable nor sufficient anymore. The only direction to turn seems to be the state government and to Washington. Tax money to run the urban schools must be raised from a broader base than the increasingly low income central city. If the people

of this society and of the several states value effective education, if they believe the urban centers are valuable resources which cannot be allowed to decay, then these states and the nation will find suitable ways of providing necessary funds.

In many states this can be done readily by the enactment of a statewide 'urban areas' tax on the income of individuals and corporations, with the funds collected distributed fairly to school districts and to cities on the basis of need and population. I mention cities as recipients of such state collected revenues because unless cities are enabled to cope with their multiple problems, no amount of school money will hold people with children in these cities to use the schools. The plight of the schools and of city governments is interwoven. Together they must approach the state and the federal government and argue their joint need for money to survive. They dare not be divided or become competitive. If their arguments fall on unresponsive ears, then all else we may hope to achieve through the urban school will likewise fail. The children of the central cities will have been thoroughly denied and disinherited. They will have been consigned to wretched lives of hopelessness and despair. And the society will have undermined itself.

9. Finally, as we evaluate our educational system and seek to apply it most comprehensively and efficiently to prepare for the undreamed world of the future, which will be even faster paced than the present, we must clarify the role of parents and of teachers. Parents are confused as to what is expected of them in the whole matter of socializing their children in

this urban-industrial world. As a consequence of their confusion and as a result of their being caught up in the frantic, materialistic race to acquire more and more of everything new, these parents tend to abdicate any responsibility for educating their children. This is not to say of course that children don't learn from them. They do, but what they learn is picked up informally by accidently overhearing and by observing parental example. What values these children learn thereby are not necessarily consistent or desirable. But learn they do.

We shall have to address ourselves to the question of whose responsibility it is to instill values and attitudes in our children, and what attitudes and values about people and society we want to have instilled, and then proceed to try to do what we want done. Without question we cannot continue to permit our children to make their own values on an individual by individual basis. That way lies chaos and anarchy. We cannot afford to move much further in that direction without encountering disaster. We must define our values and our priorities, and decide what role parents and teachers have respectively to develop them in our children and in ourselves.

In a free society, the educational institution, like all others, requires constant review and revision. To provide that revision does not mean a return to yesterday. It requires rather a bold and perceptive push into the future with a determined willingness to utilize our accumulating knowledge, to innovate and to be attuned to the voices of our children. We have much to learn from them even as we endeavor to teach them what we can. We cannot be much less relevant than we are

now. With courage, patience and intelligence, and with a bit less adult arrogance, we may be able to help the schools resume their place as a renewed and relevant leadership agency in the life and problems of our urban society.

Mel Ravitz
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